

Towards a Science of Consciousness 3-7 may 2011

62 What can a brain really do? Mind-body question is either undecidable or materialism is false. Solving the problem of consciousness by transforming the hard problems to easy ones Jan Pilotti <dr.pilotti@telia.com> (Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Örebro, Sweden, Örebro, Sweden)

The mind-body problem seems not to be empirically answerable because the empirical content of existing mind-body "theories" is inadequate, as no "theory" seemingly can predict which experiences are possible and which are not. Non-materialistic views on the mind-body-problem cannot be falsified by empirical data and are therefore unscientific in Popper's view, and are therefore beliefs. But the materialistic views are equally bad in this respect, as there seems not to exist any empirical phenomenon that can be observed, in this life before death, which must be accepted as a falsification of the materialistic view. My first conclusion is that the mind-body problem is undecidable within existing science. We have therefore to choose on other grounds. Sometimes it is proposed that we should according to the principle of Occam's razor choose materialism, which is thought to be simpler. But materialism has not explained consciousness, e.g. qualia, and more importantly; on what grounds are we to choose simplicity instead of meaning? But there might still exist a more empirical approach, which can falsify materialism and therefore decide the question. We can look at the very structure of experience at its basis, namely the number of dimensions that we can experience. In our world we can experience three independent space directions: length, breadth and height and our physical space and all its material objects are three-dimensional. I think this is as self-evident as anything can be and is also the basis of classical physics. As a thought-experiment we can try to experience a world as a linelander (who can move just back and forth) and as a flatlander (who can move back and forth, and right and left) compared with us who can move back and forth, right and left, up and down. Also I think we could easily discriminate between these three different worlds. Even if the materialistic belief is that the brain can produce all possible experiences how this can be done is not shown. A more limited and probably simpler problem should be to show if and how a three dimensional brain could produce experiences of more than three dimensions. This problem can be approached in three ways, which together could give a reasonable answer: 1. To construct a theory which shows how a three dimensional structure can produce something with four independent directions of movement. Or by analysis of possible alleged materialistic theories for consciousness show that the project is impossible on logical and mathematical grounds. 2. To construct non-materialistic theories which do explain how we can experience more than three dimensions. 3. To show that there exists experience that includes more than three dimensions. The extension of special theory of relativity to six dimensions, three space and three time dimensions, where conscious experiences are identified not with processes in the brain but with processes in the six-dimensional spacetime solves the problem of qualia and transforms the hard problems to easy problems in a six dimensional physical spacetime structure and thus solves the problem of consciousness.